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Annie: Hi friends! Welcome to a Friday bonus episode of That Sounds Fun. Y'all know I love being with you on a Friday. I'm your host Annie F. Downs. I'm so happy to be here with you today. Today is actually our last episode before our summer Sabbath here at Downs Books Inc. and the That Sounds Fun Network.

But while our team is resting, you are in for a treat here on the podcast in July. I'll tell you all about what's coming toward the end of this episode. So don't miss that. But just know we won't have any new episodes next week, the week of July 4th as we'll all be taking some time off, and then the podcast we'll be back starting Monday, July 10th. We've prepped some episodes for you that you are going to love. They're so fun.

Today on the show we have Allen Arnold. As we were thinking through the right person to help lead us into our summer Sabbath, Allen came to mind. As a part of the Wild at Heart team with our friend John Eldredge and as an author and speaker, Allen has helped create content that leads us to more rest, creativity reset, and in general just leads us closer to God.

Allen is the executive producer of content for Wild at Heart, a former fiction publisher at the world's largest Christian publishing house. He now helps people live better stories by showing them how to pursue their dreams and giftings actively with God. Allen is the author of four books and today we're talking about his book, *The Eden Option*. I think you're really going to love this conversation as we all think about ways to incorporate more rest into our lives, whether that's through time off this summer or a Sabbath each week, or a longer sabbatical in your year.

As you may have seen, our friend Tish Harrison Warren wrote a beautiful piece for New York Times Opinion that released last weekend about rest and sabbatical and what that can look like. And I was honored to get to chat with her about how we do that around here. And knowing that Allen Arnold was coming on the podcast and that this is how we were going to set up the month of July and especially next week when a lot of Americans are resting and taking a break for July 4th, we'll be doing the same. So I hope you will check out that article. We'll link to it in the show notes. And also here is my conversation with our friend Allen Arnold.

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Annie: Allen Arnold, welcome to That Sounds Fun.

Allen: Thank you. It's really fun to be here. We are just getting started but I really am looking forward to the conversation.

Annie: Oh, listen, I told you a snippet of this when you walked in but I really wanted to save it for when we're recording, that your voice is such a central voice in my faith right now because I'm such a fan of the Wild at Heart podcast and what you and John are two of the host of that show. And I just enjoy it so much. So thank y'all for the show you make in the work you're doing.

Allen: Thank you, Annie. We love doing it. It's a big need in the world today is to go after people's hearts and help them come alive, fully alive as God made them to be.

Annie: What made you leave... Because you were in publishing. You were in this world already. You were already doing the work of helping people put their God-given stories into as many hands as possible. What made you leave that to do a different version of this, to go with one specific author?

Allen: Well, it was the thing I never thought I would do. Because when I was in publishing, one of the things I learned, I was a fiction publisher, and quickly you learn the more authors you have, it's like an investment fund where if anything happened to one author, you've still got 49 others, so the ship keeps moving forward. And I always thought, Man, for somebody to work with one author, what a risky thing because anything that happens to that author, if they get hit by a bus, there goes everything.

Annie: My whole team agrees with me. They know. They fear of this.

Allen: So I never imagined that. Actually, it was a Camelot period. As a fiction publisher, we were doing such fun projects with such gifted writers. But what happened was, I got a call from John Eldredge one day. I had read some of his books like Wild at Heart and been to the events that he did. But he called and he said, "Hey, Allen, I just want to talk to you for a minute. Basically, we'd like you to come work for us and move from Nashville to Colorado."

I listened for a minute or two and was really humbled by it but I just said yeah, "Hey, thanks, but no, thanks. I'm good. I love what I'm doing. I'll keep coming to the events at Wild at Heart." And John, I'll never forget, Annie, he goes, "Hey, Allen, that's fine, but before you hang up, pal, just one thing, God's already told us you're coming."

Annie: Oh my gosh.

Allen: "So when you hang up, spend some time talking to Him and see what He says and get back." It was so disruptive. It was also so exposing because, at that moment, I

was like, "I didn't even ask God, I just assumed what was happening was the way it should continue happening in my life."

Annie: Wow.

Allen: So it quickly became apparent to my wife and to me that God was inviting us. So I've been there now for 11 years in it. It really wasn't a matter of wanting to leave or wanting a change. I was in a Christian corporate publishing world and I went to a ministry world. So it's very different from hundreds of people to a team of about 12 people.

But here's the thing, Annie, I thought when I moved that God was inviting me... I would have just described it as you're going from this role to this role, from corporate to ministry. And that's true on one level. But the real deeper journey God had me on was a journey of sonship and learning how to be a son of a really good dad.

And the thing is if God had offered me that on the front end and said, "Hey, Allen, I want you to move to Colorado, leave your job, go to another ministry, and the whole reason is a sonship journey," I didn't even know enough about sonship, I wouldn't have said yes. Like, it's embarrassing for me to say, but I would not have said yes to that because it would have felt too just risky and too unclear what it was. And I would have probably argued with God that no, just teach me sonship right here in my world right where I am.

So that was the hidden gold of the last decade. Yes, I'm still at Wild at Heart. I love it. But the real journey was a journey of what does it mean to be a son, and for the female listeners, a daughter of God? How does that look in real practical terms, not just to quoting a scripture verse? And that's what I've had for the last decade.

Annie: Wow. So many people need to hear that because they're sussing out, is God asking us to move here, to go there, to change jobs, to go to a different community, or to go to a different school? And there always seems to be the reason you think you're going and the reason you're actually going. Usually, it's both, right?

Allen: Right. But you usually don't know the deeper reason unless and until you say yes. So if you don't and you stay where you are, well, it's not that God's gonna be angry or anything like that. Probably.

Annie: You're like, I don't know.

Allen: I mean, unless He told you to go. But sometimes He gives us a choice. But we don't even know what that new terrain, that new path would hold unless we say yes. If

we say no, God usually doesn't reveal that. It's something that we don't get to find out.

Annie: In your new book, *The Eden Option*, you talk about choosing two stories.

Allen: Right.

Annie: I kind of want us to lean on that a little bit as our outline today only because I think... I mean, we just hear from so many people who are making decisions and who are trying to hear God. They want to hear God. So will you explain what the two stories are so they can kind of track with us on which way we're going here?

Allen: Right? Can I tell you a little story to go with it?

Annie: Yes, please.

Allen: Okay. So the whole concept of *The Eden Option*, the book came from an experience in my life about two years ago. As you and I talked about, I'm a co-host of The Wild at Heart podcast. I do a lot of speaking and teaching. I use my voice a lot. And I had used it so much that I lost my voice.

So after a week or two of it not coming back, I saw a specialist and the specialist said, "Yeah, Allen, you've got these nodules." And he put a camera down my throat, and he showed it to me, and he said, "Until these are removed, you're going to have about 20% of your voice at best. You're going to be... a horse whisperer is going to be your best voice."

So reluctantly I scheduled the surgery, which was a few months away, because they're so busy. So for a few months, I had no voice. And it's like the day before the surgery, and I'm out doing yard work, and as I'm out doing yard work, I sense God say, Sit down. So I set aside the equipment, I sat in my backyard. And God said, "Allen, do you want Story 1 or Story 2?" I never used those terms, didn't even know what it meant. Thankfully, I knew enough to know when God asks me something I don't know, it's an invitation into conversation.

Annie: Can we interrupt here just for people who are like, how did you know that was God?

Allen: Right? Well, of course, what I'm talking about is not an audible voice. I'm talking about something within, the spirit within. But it's basically living in a way that you believe that the Bible is a book of examples of how God interacts with us, which is in Scripture, I mean, story after story, Annie, is God speaking in the Old Testament. In the New Testament, Jesus says, "My sheep hear my voice." So over time, you

can, I think, really practice the art of listening for the voice of God. And it's like learning to play an instrument or anything else. It takes time. But over time, you can recognize this is not me. And another way to know it's not you is because it's usually not anything you would say to yourself at all.

Annie: Right. It's even you saying Story 1 and Story 2, you didn't have that language.

Allen: I wasn't even thinking about my voice at that time.

Annie: Wow.

Allen: So when God offered that, I didn't know what it meant. So, okay, this is an invitation for conversation. So I'm just sitting there in my backyard and I said, "Okay, God, well, I don't know what that means. It feels like a game show, door one, door two. I don't want to do the wrong door."

And He basically said, "Listen, Story 1 is cancel the procedure. It's not about a doctor being the right path or the wrong path, but cancel it and watch what I will invite you into. It's no guarantees, but me. It's mystery." But basically... And I'm not... I'm telling you what the sense was I was getting from God versus a word-for-word transcript.

And He said, Story 2 is go ahead, have the procedure and just do that. That's the way the world normally does things is, there's a problem, you go head to the expert. Whether it's financial, or whether it's working out at the gym, or whatever. So your choice. And that's all I heard. And everything in me truly wanted to stay in Story 2, go into Story 2. So at that point, that was all I knew.

So as I'm continuing the yard work, I continue asking God but what is Story 1 and Story 2? Tell me more, tell me more." And basically, God revealed to me that Story 1 is the story of Him at the epicenter of everything. It's the true story that we were created for all the way back to Eden, Him at the epicenter of everything. And Story 2 is actually a story where we're at the epicenter.

Annie: Oh, wow.

Allen: It's really the default narrative that we're born into, which is not Eden and God walking with us in the cool of the day as He did with Adam and Eve. But it's us in an Ecclesiastes-type world trying to make sense of it, trying to do the best we can, hoping that we somehow come out okay. But it's more of a scarcity mindset. It's not an abundance mindset.

So, Annie, that was really... It's basically trying to make life work without God ever needing to show up. And He's our rescue plan and He's there but that's Story 2. And the thing about Story 2 is... the more I learned is Story 2 is actually... it feels really normal because it's the world we're born into. So there's a big difference, though, between normal and what God has for us and what we experienced on our own and what we could experience. So I ended up choosing Story 1. I wrestled with it for a few hours-

Annie: I bet Kelly did too, right? It's like, "What are you saying?"

Allen: Listen, Kelly, she actually... I could not have found a better woman to go through life with. She's amazing. So when I came in, and I'm all sweaty and covered in grass, I said, "Here's what God said," she was like, "Well, you got to do Story 1."

Annie: Wow.

Allen: Because she's like, "If you don't, you'll never know." And I'm like, "Right, but God didn't promise I'd get my voice back. He just promised He'd be with me." And she's like, "Yeah." So I canceled the surgery the next morning and it was a very awkward conversation-

Annie: I'm sure.

Allen: ...because part of it was I sense God saying, Allen, if you're gonna go and Story 1, it'll be awkward, but enter fully in. So, when the assistant to the doctor answered the phone, and she's like, "Okay, you're gonna cancel your surgery? You've been waiting months for this now?" I'm like, "Right." "Well, do you mind if I ask why?" And there was that awkward silence. Because I could have just said anything and gotten off quick.

Annie: Sure.

Allen: And I said, "Well actually God invited me into a different story."

Annie: Oh my gosh.

Allen: And there were just crickets on the line.

Annie: Oh, I'm sure.

Allen: I mean, nothing for what felt like 30 seconds. And she goes, "Okay, well, when you want your voice back and get tired of not having your full voice will call us and maybe another couple of months. But we'll try to get you in."

Annie: Wow.

Allen: You know, it was very awkward. But I knew something cool was going to happen. The next couple of days, nothing happened. I didn't even hear anything from God. And I'm thinking, "Wow, I didn't do the procedure. I am in Story 1, I don't know if I like Story 1 all of a sudden, but I know I'm walking into it with God. And the resolution on the third day, I wake up, I turn over to say hi to my wife, good morning to her, and when I do, my voice shocks both of us because it's 100%."

Annie: Wow.

Allen: And this has been at that point over two months. And I hadn't done anything indifferent, Annie. I'd already let go of the pressure I would put on God to return my voice. I was like, "I just want you, God. I want the story." And my voice was back three days later, and it's been back for years." But better than getting my voice back was a whole new way to see life, which was, am I in Story 1 or Story 2?

And the reality is, I think most believers spend most of their life stuck in the wrong story—in Story 2. They love God, they believe in God, they're saved, but they're in the wrong story because they've come to see the Ecclesiastes world around them, and the way things work is just the way things are. So they follow a Story 2 God—a God that's mostly silent, mostly absent, unreliable. So that's the view of God in Story 2—it's a world of scarcity, it's a world where it's mostly up to you to make things happen.

So these are believers, these are people who go to church, these are, you know... and I would have been in that category, but then to go, "But I don't have to stay in Story 2. I can actually get into the Story 1 that was the original story from Eden, paradise, they got lost, I want to do that."

Annie: How do we know? How do we know if we're in Story 2?

Allen: Well, there's two quick ways. One is, if you haven't chosen Story 1 in an active way, you're in Story 2. Because it's the default.

Annie: So it's even just a chance right now any of our friends could go, "Okay, Lord, I'll take Story 1," and something is gonna shift.

Allen: Right. First of all, it's just acknowledging I'm not in the right story.

Annie: Right. Right.

Allen: Then in the book, I have these two columns that I'll just read you a couple of comparisons of Story 1 and Story 2 and just see which sounds, you know, if you're listening, which sounds most like your normal life, your normal day. Story 1: God's at the center of everything. Story 2: you're at the center of everything. Story 1: you feel fully seen and known and loved. Story 2: you feel mostly unseen and unknown. Story 1: you are living with openhanded abundance and Story 2: it's a scarcity mindset. Story 1: is an expectancy, God, I'm expectant for what you're going to do today. Story 2 is expectations. No, no, it has to happen this way for me to be okay.

Annie: Wow.

Allen: So you start looking at these. Story 1 is being fully present to the people, and just the life around you. Story 2 is constant numbing and distraction. And you look at people today, like even when they're together at a restaurant as a couple, or as a family, everybody's head is stuck in their screen. We are addicted to the screen, we're not fully present. And that's a Story 2 way to live.

And last I'd say, you look at the difference between rest and relief. And rest is a byproduct of being in the right story—Story 1. It's the ability to really rest. Where Story 2 relief is the best you can get which is a numbing of all of the fears and worries and stress. And you can't really have true rest, so we binge on a Netflix series or we have the second third glass and fourth glass of wine that night or the pint of ice cream or we check out and numb in some way that never makes us more whole.

Annie: I learned this about myself, that I was going on vacation, and never actually resting because I was expecting vacation to repair a year's worth of Story 2 living. And then you go on vacation and it never lived up to your expectation because you were asking it to be all these things that four days at the beach could never be.

Allen: Never.

Annie: So when I was reading through that, I was like there have been years in my life where I was looking for relief, not rest.

Allen: And in Story 2 where we grew up that way where, you know, we don't really know how to rest. We think at best it's an hour nap on a Sunday. But even then it's like our language is like, yeah, I just got to take a nap because I've got to recharge for Monday. And what we're really saying in that is, Well, it's not about being more it's about doing more and so the only rest we have is this temporary hour or two and the whole purpose is just to recharge to do more. But what we really need to remember and awaken to is no, no, no we were created for true rest. Not once a week, not one hour, not a one-week vacation from a year of stress and striving.

And think about in the garden with Adam and Eve. I love how the first full day after Adam was created was the seven day. A full day of rest. The very first full day that Adam and God have together, I think is such a beautiful picture. It's a day of rest. It's not a first full day of God saying, Okay, it's your first day on the job-

Annie: Name the animals. Go.

Allen: Right. Get busy. Prove your worth.

[00:20:34] <music>

Sponsor: Hey friends! Just interrupting this conversation to share about one of our amazing partners, [Loop for Women](#) from Gather Ministries. The team at Loop for Women in Gather Ministries recently shared that they surveyed their 100,000-plus readers this spring. And do you want to know the number one reason women subscribe to their devotionals? They want to hear God's heart for them. And the devotionals from Loop for Women help do that by filling them with hope and encouragement in hard seasons. I get it.

Their Monday and Wednesday email devotionals are just beautiful and written for women like you and me. They take just a few minutes to read, and then there's an invitation to linger with whatever God has stirred up in your heart. They don't mess around either. They go right to the heart of how God sees us, how to encounter God and the messiness of everyday life, what God wants to show us to the beauty of His creation, and more.

At the end of each devotional, there's a mini newsletter of sorts, which is really fun. And this is where Jennifer curates some of her favorite book recommendations, interesting articles on topics like grief and marriage being present in your life, poems and so much more. At the end of each devotional, I feel like I've been poured into by the Holy Spirit and also offered resources to help me move forward. I think you'll really love what Loop for Women has to offer.

To learn more about this free email devotional and sign up today, just head to loopforwomen.com/tsf. Again, that's loopforwomen.com/tsf.

Annie: Okay, you guys tomorrow, we start a new month of reading the gospels together over on the Let's Read the Gospels podcast. In July, we're going to read the Christian Standard Bible, the CSB. We got to do this version in May and y'all loved it and we loved it. But this time, we'll read the four Gospels in a different order. We're reading John, which y'all know I love starting with John, and then Matthew, and then Luke, and then we're going to actually finish with Mark.

We'll read about three chapters a day, get through all 40 books in the first 30 days of July. So maybe July is your opportunity to start a new rhythm by starting your days in the Gospels. 15 minutes a day may be just the daily deep breath you need.

And if you're like me, it helps keep me on track if someone else is doing it with me. So share about it with your people on social media today and tomorrow. Shoot them a text or an email, invite your people to join you. Who else in your life could go through the Gospels with you? It's like we say around here all the time: you don't have to be in the gospels every day to be changed but every day you're in the gospels will change you. We believe that. We've seen that in our own lives. We're hearing that from y'all. So come and join us, friends. Subscribe to Let's Read the Gospels wherever you are listening to this podcast.

Now back to our conversation with Allen Arnold.

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Annie: We got to talk a little bit about the Garden of Eden because you wrote two things in his book that blew my mind. We joke around here about having that mind-blown emoji, that we have these scales of how many mind-blown emojis this is. So this was like a three or four mind-blown emoji for me that you do a whole section about Jesus in Eden and what was Jesus doing it even. I thought, well, I don't... we talked about it at lunch the other day because we know God's there and we know the spirits there because he's hovering over the water. But Jesus doesn't have any jobs we know of in Genesis, but it says in John, "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God." What was Jesus doing in Eden, Allen?

Allen: That's such a fascinating question. I know.

Annie: What?

Allen: Part of this book I wanted to do was I did want to blow people's minds and my own mind in a way that creates this sense of wonder in us because I think we've lost our wonder and awe over Eden. So yeah, it was just this question of, well, of course, as part of the Trinity, Jesus was involved in creation. Like we hear in John 1, all things were created in and through Him. And so then to think-

Annie: And without Him nothing was made. How is...? Allen, this is what I'm telling you. You mess with us so much on this.

Allen: Okay, this messes with my mind even more to think about this. But whatever He was doing in Eden... And we know... I mean, it's just a given to me that He would

be active and present. Like, did He have something better to do like the beginning of creation? But here's the thing. He would have been in His pre-incarnate form, meaning this is not the Jesus that was born of the Virgin Mary.

Annie: Yeah, it's not Jesus in a robe like in *The Chosen*.

Allen: Right. So don't picture Jesus in a robe walking through Eden. Picture in your mind-

Annie: What?

Allen: ...Like yeah. What would Jesus in His form... He hadn't even been given the name Jesus at that point, right?

Annie: What?

Allen: I'm just saying-

Annie: Was he just the Son?

Allen: Well, this is the kind of thing that I want to-

Annie: This is so fun to think about. Oh, this is so interesting.

Allen: And I think God loves when we think about things like this because so often, and I'm guilty of this too, but we go to God in prayer with a list of things we need Him to come through for us. And it's a one-way monologue, not a conversation or a dialogue. So, to me, when people say, Well, okay, but what would I talk to God about other than the things I need Him to do for me? And it's like, well, here's a great example. God, what was Jesus... What was happening in Eden? Blow my mind. Show me. Help me sense in creation what was happening. Increase my awe and wonder of You as creator, of the role of the Holy Spirit, of the role of Jesus in Eden. So the book doesn't have answers because we don't have those answers.

Annie: It's okay if you don't know these answers. But my follow-up questions are, wrestling with Jacob and the fourth man in the fire with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Jesus? Angels?

Allen: I mean, I think Scripture leaves open that it certainly could have been Jesus. And there are other appearances in the Old Testament as well-

Annie: But I've always pictured Jesus in a robe. And now you're telling me that that version of Jesus had not been created yet? Oh, boy.

Allen: Jesus always existed. So there's always been Father, Son, Spirit. But yeah, I think it's so hard in our mind not to picture Jesus in a robe and in that kind of the 33 years of his life, like what He would have worn and how He would have looked. And to go, okay, but in Eden... Like we have to take our restraints and limits off of God. We have to have a place for wonder and mystery because God's ways are so much higher and better and beyond us. But that doesn't mean we don't try or that doesn't mean we just kind of go, Well, whatever. I'll find out when I'm in heaven.

Annie: That's right.

Allen: Like it's to go, No, God, I'm curious. Like, wow, this is so cool to think about. And I think He loves when His sons and daughters, just like we would love if our sons or daughters, you know, anyone listening as a young child would go, And tell us a story of what really happened. When you were a boy, Dad, what...? We love that. We don't go, You wouldn't understand. Just go away.

Annie: Yeah. I mean, my parents are doing Storyworth right now where the system emails them a question every week and they write in an answer. And it has been amazing. I can't wait for my siblings to see all their answers. You're right. The curiosity level. It is totally within our rights as humans, and as Christians to have a high curiosity level with God.

Allen: Well, God gave us that imagination. He didn't have to do that. And if you think about it, with Adam and Eve, their imagination initially, before... you know, from Paradise, however long that period lasted, which I think it was probably longer than we imagine because we talk about creation and the fall.

Annie: Yeah, yeah. Like back to back.

Allen: A phrase. But paradise, we don't know how long that was, right? But it was long enough for Him to teach Adam and Eve language-

Annie: I had never thought about that till I read this in your book.

Allen: ...and fathered them. Again, going back to... he's their father. We don't know how long that paradise lasted. But the interesting thing is, when it ended, what we do know is they turned from their fascination and love, and intimacy with God to looking for something else that they thought might give them more life. And when that shift happened, that's where the trouble began. And we're still reeling from it today. But we're not just reeling from that. We're doing the same type thing, because the imagination God gives us allows us to think creatively. And when we think creatively, that can pull us away from God or it can pull us toward the

Creator. And Adam and Eve use that power of imagination to imagine life without God.

Annie: Oh, wow.

Allen: You would think after the fall God would have said, "You know what? I'm taking that gift back. Humanity no longer has imagination, because it's broken my heart, it's created a tragic situation. So humans will now be humans without an imagination." But He didn't. And we have this powerful imagination but we often don't use it in ways that draws us back to God. And some of the questions and things we're talking about, like for those listening who are like, Yeah, but what's the answer? Well, that's not the point always. The point of curiosity isn't always just get to the answer, it's I want to get to know someone better.

Annie: In one of the Pause app devotions, it's one of the longer... It may be the series John just did with the most recent book. And one of the things he, as you do, is like, Okay, imagine the place where you go and meet with Jesus when you're praying. Even opportunities like that... I think it's in the resilience section. Would that be right?

Allen: Yes, that's right.

Annie: Even in that, it's this opportunity to go like, I'm allowed... I know allowed is a funny word, but as a rule-following Christian girl growing up that way, that is good for me. It is good and right for us to use our imagination to even encounter God and to picture praying and to picture what we would like to see Him do.

Allen: Right, right. It's a way to draw closer to God in intimacy by imagining and seeing our hearts desires as something that He's given us and then asking Him with expectancy like, "God, what will this look like when I'm older? What about the things that aren't coming to pass right now that I really want?"

And I'm not saying you're making a story up. I'm saying you're taking your whole heart, mind, soul, spirit, your imagination to God and saying, Let me have a glimpse of what's coming so that I can weather the storm or this dry desert season actively with You. And I think the Father loves to do that. And it's never going to go against scripture. I'm not saying you create this fantastical scenario that then God has to deliver on, because it was your idea, but now you expect God to do it. I'm saying enter into it like a dance with God.

Annie: Our friends listening have just listened to an entire month of podcast episodes about dating. We did Summer Lovin' for all of June.

Allen: I love that title.

Annie: To restore some hope in dating and to restore some hope that God is writing a story in your life even if you don't have exactly what you want right now. So when I'm thinking about Story 1 and Story 2, for our friends that are listening that want something they don't have, a marriage, children, a different job, a different house, can you kind of teach us through how do we pursue Story 1 for things that we want that we don't have?

Allen: Right. Well, it's a great question. And here's the thing. We're either in Story 1 or Story 2. And sometimes we vacillate in the same hour between those two.

Annie: Certainly.

Allen: And people in Scripture did as well. Some of the heroes of the faith did that as well. But the thing I think that's important first is David is a great example of a man after God's heart but he wrestled with God on topics. And he would be emotive, and he would be very blunt. And he would really go after it with God. But he never doubted God. So Story 2 and 1, the difference to me in a big picture level is Story 2 has doubt embedded in it and Story 1 doesn't have doubt in terms of our relationship with God and His goodness.

So we can doubt whether it's going to rain that day, we can doubt the goodness of a person we may want to date, and we're finding out certain things. I'm not saying those things there isn't doubt in. But I'm saying in Story 1, there's not doubt in God because that's what the enemy has always been after is doubt God is who He says He is, doubt his voice doubt His goodness. And we see where that leads when we try to put doubt on the relationship with God.

So if you're in a place of longing, where things aren't coming together as you wish, and you sense, Gosh, God has really given me this desire for a spouse or for a home or to have a different kind of job and I don't see it happening, well, Annie, one of the first things to do is go, okay, I can either have that doubt in Story 2 or I can have it in Story 1. And I can enter into Story 1 if I choose by giving that doubt to God and saying, "I no longer doubt you God because in Story 1, you are a good Father, you are active, you created me, you gave me my desires, and now I'll have an expectancy. I'll be patient even in the pain because I know that you're coming through in a way that may not look like how I think it will but you're coming through for me.

Where Story 2, that doubt, ends up being bitterness over time or creates a distance between us and God, and the bridge between us, it collapses. And that's what the enemy wants. So in Story 2, the sense is, yeah, God didn't come through. I didn't

think He was going to anyway. Or He didn't last time. And we start letting this erosion of intimacy happen between us and God. We start doubting that He'll come through again the next time. And that's so Story 2. And we see it all around us in the world we're in.

And I'm talking about believers, because one of the other mind-blowing things to me as I was researching for this book is it was a realization Adam and Eve were believers in Eden, in paradise. But after they doubted God, ate from the wrong tree, they were still believers. I mean, they didn't quit believing God, they were hiding from Him. That was the first thing they did after the fall was they hid from Him and then they blamed each other, and blamed the serpent. And you don't argue or hide from somebody you don't believe in. So they had entered into story too but we're still believers.

The thing is, they just believed other things would bring happiness more than God. So we can be believers and stuck in Story 2. And this invitation really is, you don't have to have all the answers. But what we do want is going to be found in Story 1. So when you actively make the choice, I'm leaving Story 2, I'm leaving the Story 2 God definition, I'm leaving the Story 2 limitations on me and my dreams, I'm leaving the Story 2 limits I placed on my gifting and where I work, I'm leaving the Story 2 family history that I've been a part of perhaps, and I'm going into Story 1, which is the story where God's at the epicenter of everything, then that starts to change everything.

It's very practical even. I flew here for this interview. And when I was at the airport, there was an issue with a flight and I was in line and everybody was frustrated about some of the changes to the flight. And I was the second one up all of a sudden and I found myself going okay, Allen, do this as a Story 1, Son of God, not the Story 2 make-it-happen guy who wants to push for his rights and make something happen. But go in as an expectant son and really see the other person on the other side of the counter is a daughter of God and watch what happens.

And Annie, it made such a difference. And that's a small example. But it's basically saying, in the little things of life and the big things of life, when we approach it from a Story 1 viewpoint, all of a sudden, we don't just believe differently, we live differently.

Annie: Yeah. And it isn't every day. If we do that with the woman on the other side of the counter, or at the grocery store, or with our co-workers, or with our family, then when the bigger things, the longer things are going on with God, you've got the same posture because you're practicing it.

Allen: Right.

Annie: So by you practicing at the airport, you're actually setting yourself up for the next time a big hurdle comes in your work life. You go, Well, I've already got the posture because I've practiced it.

Allen: Right. But this isn't just a kind of grit your teeth and fake it. A lot of times those who live in the South, there's this Southern hospitality, but sometimes that's only an inch deep. Like it feels really good, but if you dig much deeper, you realize, "I'm not really sure how real that is."

Annie: I'm not sure if I believe you.

Allen: But the surface part was nice. But I'm not talking about that. I'm saying, you want to be fully united with God to where you're going into that not pretending to be nice or patient, you actually are practicing the fruits of the Spirit. You're actually a different person. And that makes all the difference in the world.

So you can still have those longings and things still don't... you know, on the surface, maybe looks like they're coming together like you wanted. But the posture is the posture of, God, you're with me and I know you know my longings more than anybody. I'm fully seen and known and loved here because Adam and Eve were fully seen and known and loved in the garden before the fall. They had this intimacy. And in Story 2, we never get that. And Story 2, most people never feel fully seen, they never feel fully known. And if they were, they're afraid they could never be fully loved.

Annie: Yes. Yes.

Allen: And so it's this double-edged sword where I don't feel fully known or seen but oh my goodness, if I was that would even be worse because that would push people away or they'd be disgusted or turned off. So Story 1 is where it's no, first God sees me fully and He loves me fully. And now I can live in that identity in my longings, in my victories, in my disappointments. And I never doubt God's goodness. I may wrestle with Him. We may have long conversations, you know, where there's a lot of questions but His goodness isn't on trial.

Annie: The gift of getting to read the gospels every month is different things stand out to me, right?

Allen: Yes.

Annie: Earlier this week we were reading the story of Jesus walking on the water. In the NRSV that we've been reading this month it says, "When Jesus saw them

struggling with the oars against the wind, He started walking toward them." And I was like, "Oh, there was a reason. Oh, He saw them struggling?" So I found myself even in prayer this week, Allen, saying to Jesus, Have you at least left the shore? Because I know you see me struggling against this wind. Just tell me you're on the way. Because once He saw them, He wasn't immediately to them. He just started walking.

Allen: Right. Wow.

Annie: So what you're telling me about Story 1 is this opportunity to like... we're still meant to hold on to our oars and we're still meant to paddle against the wind. But in Story 1, Jesus is walking towards you.

Allen: Yes. Absolutely. But there are some times, Annie, too, I think where, and I've seen this in my own life where I am struggling against the wind and I have those oars in a tight grip, and I'm struggling and God has said in the last... this is in the last couple of months even, "Allen, just drop the oars." Actually, you don't even have to do part of it sometimes. And for a very formerly driven man...

Annie: Yeah. Will you talk about that? Because that is... Ooh.

Allen: ...it's so hard. It's so hard. But it starts to reveal that orphan spirit within us, not a Spirit of sonship or daughter. But that no, no, no, I can't let go. Because if I do let go, it really is going to fall apart. Like I believe in God but I believe a little more in my efforts to control the situation because it depends on that.

And when God says, No, it actually doesn't. Let them go." And that is one of the most freeing things to see happen. Like you actually do let go when God says to and you go, and He did it. It wasn't 95% me and 5% Him or 5% me and 95% Him. Like some of the times as a good dad would do, it's 100% Him. And then other times He'll say, No, no, you step up. So if we're passive, then part of Story 1 is learning to be more active with God. If we think it's all up to us, part of Story 1 is the opposite. It's going, Actually, dial it down because-

Annie: Allen, I don't know how to do that. I don't know how to do that very well.

[00:43:17] <music>

Sponsor: Hey friends! Just interrupting this conversation one more time to share about another amazing partner, [Hiya Health](#). This one is for my miniBFFs. Listen, I want all of us to stay healthy, including all of my miniBFFs, but I know getting them to take their vitamins can be a struggle. They're only interested in something that tastes good. That's where Hiya Health comes in.

Typically children's vitamins contain sugar, unhealthy chemicals and junk that growing kids just don't need. But Hiya Health is a pediatrician-approved and a superpower chewable vitamin. Hiya is made with zero sugar and zero gummy junk but it tastes great and is perfect for those picky eaters. It's formulated with the help of nutritional experts and pressed with a blend of 12 organic fruits and veggies, then supercharged with 15 essential vitamins and minerals, including vitamin D, B12, C, zinc, folate, and many others help support immunity, energy, brain function, mood concentration, your teeth, and your bones and so much more.

Hiya is designed for kids of all ages and sent straight to your door so parents have one less thing to worry about. We've worked out a special deal with Hiya for their bestselling children's vitamin. You get 50% off your first order.

So to claim this deal, you must go to hiyahealth.com/thatsoundsfun. This deal is actually not available on their regular website. It's like hidden away just for our friends. So go to hiyahealth.com/thatsoundsfun and get your kids the full body nourishment they need to grow into healthy adults.

That link and pretty much every other link you can ever hope for are in the show notes or in today's AFD Week in Review. So be sure to check those out.

Okay, friends, real quick, I also want to tell you what's happening on the That Sounds Fun podcast in July. Are you ready? Okay. Starting July 10th, we're calling it the TSF Hall of Fun series. And we are bringing back some of our favorite episodes from over the years for you to listen to. Some of you have been around since day one of the podcast back in 2014. Yes, that means we are about to be in our 10th year. And y'all will remember these. Maybe they are some of your favorites too but there are so many of you who are new around here in the last year.

So we thought July would be a great opportunity to highlight some episodes that we hope you won't miss. Whether you're going to be on a boat, or on a plane, commuting to work or working out, these episodes will be so fun and helpful, and these kinds of conversations that are good to come along with you in July.

And be thinking which episodes would you put in the Hall of Fun. Let's see if your picks end up in this series as well. If you haven't already, make sure you're subscribed right here to That Sounds Fun. Wherever you're listening to this That Sounds Fun episode, make sure you're subscribed so you don't miss any of it. Remember, we do not have a show next Monday, Thursday. But we'll be back on July 10th.

And now let's go back and finish up this really important conversation with our friend Allen Arnold.

[00:46:08] <music>

Annie: Will you tell us a little bit about your story?

Allen: Yes.

Annie: Especially as we're walking into our staff Sabbath, as we're... I mean, this is really when we get to encourage all of our friends like, you can take a break. We're taking a break. We're going to be gone for a week, and we're going to rest for a couple of weeks. So will you talk a little bit about your driven history? Help me.

Allen: Yes. I was probably one of the most driven people anyone would ever meet. And I don't know when it began. Actually, it was after college because I was a pretty light-hearted, playful guy all the way through college. But I think it began, Annie, when I was in my first job at an ad agency. I was a marketing major.

Annie: Oh, like... what's the show? Men

Allen: *Mad Men.*

Annie: *Mad Men.*

Allen: It was totally like that. And at the time people were smoking in the offices still in the cubicle. It was a very creative, imaginative culture but it was also a very young place where most of the people had not grown up. So they're really creative but very immature. But there was this driven hard work just mindset of you've got to be 24/7.

So I was in on a Saturday working and the head of the division, which was like five levels above me, happened to be in his corner office, which was right by my cubicle. And I think we were the only two people in at that particular moment of the day on Saturday. So he walks up, and he didn't even know my name. He's like, "Tell me your name."

Annie: Oh, my gosh.

Allen: I said, it's... I'm nervous. I'm like, "It's Allen." And he's like, "Allen, man, you're here on a Saturday getting stuff done?" And I said, "Yes, sir. My dad's coming in this afternoon so I just wanted to get some work done before he comes to visit." He

walked off, and about an hour later, he puts a sealed envelope on my desk. And he goes, "Give this to your dad."

Annie: Oh, wow.

Allen: I couldn't look at it at the time because it was sealed. So my dad comes a few hours later, I get home and I hand it to him. And basically it said, "Your son is one of the rare ones who will succeed because he understands you have to work 24/7 to make things happen."

Annie: Wow.

Allen: And I think and he at that point something in my younger self said, "Okay, that's it." And right after that I was at a Chinese restaurant and the fortune cookie, when I opened it the saying inside said, "The one who says it can't be done, should get out of the way of the one already doing it."

Annie: Geez.

Allen: And I taped that to my desk, that saying, and I lived... It's never wise to live by a fortune cookie mantra. But at that point in my life, I was like, "I want to be that guy." And it finally led over the next several years to the point where I was so driven and I was making things happen, I was leading a big team. And this is in Christian publishing now at this point. Like I'd left the-

Annie: Are you already married?

Allen: I'm already married. And that was not a good quality for me in the early years of my marriage, because I just always wanted to make things happen, always wanted to be right. If we were at a restaurant and had been overcharged \$5, I would talk to the waiter until it got fixed. And my wife was like, "Babe, it's \$5," and I'm like, "No, no, we've got to make this right." So it was every facet of my life. Thankfully, I didn't have kids at that time yet.

But it builds to the point where a little bit before 9/11, thankfully, because the security wasn't as heavy in airports, I was at an airport, I had a video crew we were going to do an author filming and they got on the plane, I of course was distracted trying to multitask, trying to make some deal happen. I look up, the door's close to the plane.

Annie: No.

- Allen:** They don't know where they're going. I mean, they know the city, but they don't know all the details because I have all that with me. And they're just with me. But now they're on the plane. So I ran up to the counter and the supervisor there said, "The plane is already gone." And I said, "No, no, it's right... I can see it behind you." Like through the glass. And she was like, "Nope, it's gone and we've given your seat away and the doors locked and closed."
- Annie:** Oh, my gosh.
- Allen:** And she just walks off. Well, I was such a driven man, Annie, that I watched her walk away and there's an emergency exit to the tarmac and I just walked out the emergency exit.
- Annie:** No, Allen.
- Allen:** The alarms going off-
- Annie:** You can get arrested.
- Allen:** And I stand in front of the plane with my... I have my briefcase. And again, this was-
- Annie:** Oh my gosh.
- Allen:** ...a little bit before 9/11. And I stand in front of the plane. Honestly, the best I can remember, my thought... I was probably like 26, 27 and my thought at that time was, There's no question, I'm getting on the plane. The ones that say it can't be done should get out of the way of the one doing. And I'm doing it.
- So the pilot or copilot steps off. It was a smaller commuter plane. They step out, walk up to me, what are you doing out here? And I said, Well, here's my ticket, I've got seat A10 or whatever it was, and I need my seat. And they're like, "Well, it's a full plane." And I said, well, the person in that seat needs to get out because here's my ticket. And I actually talked them into letting me do that. The other guy's walking off the tarmac, like, what the heck is going on? Because-
- Annie:** Oh my gosh. You stopped an airplane with your body. Allen.
- Allen:** It was like the airplane blinked. Like we did a face-off. And that is the timing... I wasn't even like... I was kind of just, Well, yeah, of course, this is gonna happen. And that was the man I had become, which was this, I'll be the last one standing. I'll be the bull in the china shop. I will make it happen. And I was getting rewarded for

that from bosses because they were like, "Dude, give Allen the new business pitch or whatever. He stopped a plane, he'll make it happen." And then I would.

But I was so empty inside because it was just this "I'm only as good as what I do and what do you do after you stop a plane?" I kept ratcheting it up. And I knew ultimately this is not the man I want to be. If this is me at 27, what am I going to be at 50? What's the trajectory of that man? It may be a very wealthy, successful man business-wise, but what's the heart of that man going to be? And where's the love in that person for others or seeing people and caring for them?

So eventually, that life imploded for me in the sense of not losing a job. But in the sense of I had a boss that one day a few years later came up and said, "Hey, Allen, I just want to ask you an honest question." And I was totally taken off guard. I said, "Yeah, what's up?" And we had had the best year ever with this team of like 20 that I oversaw. And he said, "Do you know that every single person, all 20 people that work for you think that you are a complete jerk?" And he didn't say the word jerk. I'm bringing it down for the podcast.

Annie: Yes, thank you.

Allen: But I said, "No." And he said, "They can't stand your presence. They're only with you because you deliver results, and they like the bonus. But I just thought you might want to know that, that they can't stand your presence."

Annie: Oh, Allen.

Allen: Well, at that moment, Annie, my initial thought that ran through my head was "I'll fire them all. I'll bring in 20 more people and they'll be grateful." And I felt like God just there... the Holy Spirit just kind of pulled the back of my collar almost like, "Stop. Just listen, and take that in." And that was the beginning of me saying, I don't want to be that man. I don't want to be that man. I don't know what it looks like to be different but I want to be different.

And that started a transformation of, what would it be like to be more instead of trying to just do more and to actually care for the hearts of others by caring for my own heart? Because my own heart had grown numb, right? So that was a journey that really started me into a path eventually that helped me be ready when John Eldredge said, "Do you want to join us?" And that journey of sonship began. That was kind of the deeper level or the next step.

But I was a total Story 2 person. If I was listening to this podcast when I was 26, I'd be like, No, no, no. I like the old guy better. I mean, I would have thought that's the way to make things happen. And it was just a Story 2 mindset that had infused my

whole being with the way the world works, which have to do. And now, I am such a happier, more content, more loving, gentle guy. And I still make things happen but I make them happen from a sonship perspective, from a Story 1 life with God. And my goal isn't at the end of the day did something happen, but it's did I walk well with God today?

Annie: This is very good that this is the last show before a little Sabbath for our team because one of the things I do in the month of July is I'm off socials, I'm off of everything. And this is about the time of year when I realized that all that has mattered maybe too much to me, and I'm going really fast. And then July happens, and I go like, "Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. Okay, let's reshape. Let's settle in. Let's get back to it.

So what my confession to you, as you're saying all this, is I'm like, Yeah, but can I... Like your 26-year-old self saying the old guy. And Annie's 42-year-old self is going, I hear you, Allen, but my drive is one of my best things about me.

Allen: And there's a part of the way God made you where that drive is part of your brilliance and it's part of your strength. I think it gets... And I'm saying this about you and me. That drivenness and drive can get warped in Story 2 in a way that was never what we were meant to be. But it still has power and it still has effect and it still has, on the surface, some value. But I think the big win is, how would that drivenness or that quality look in Story 1? Like we don't become a totally different person. We still have our gifting in our talents. It's just now refined because it's how we were meant to be.

One of the things in the book... it talks about four things we can get back that Adam and Eve relinquished after the fall. And we can reclaim those. And one of those is Eden union, which we've talked a little bit about, Eden voice, like we were born for such a time as this, Esther 4:14. So how do we use our gifting, our voice, our presence today in ways that change the atmosphere for good? Our Eden vision, how do we re-see which the word for re-see is actually respect. Respect.

Annie: Oh, wow.

Allen: So when we respect our story, we re-see it in the true way. So how do we re-see ourselves, our story, other people, God in a true way with true clarity? And the fourth is, which is what we're talking about now, Eden rest. How do we reclaim Eden rest that was lost after the fall? Like it's clear that the rest that we were made for, the restoration that was happening, I believe, daily in Eden, in paradise, all of a sudden now it's a life of striving and toil, and we're orphans. That story, too.

So when Adam and Eve left Story 1 for Story 2, everybody else since then has been born in Story 2. Like they were the only people who were born in Story 1 and left for Story 2. We now are Story 2 and we get to leave that to go back to Story 1. And rest is one of the key components that we regain when we do.

There's a friend of mine, he's in the kingdom now, but he had given me this quote years ago that was his own saying. But it blew me away. And he was talking about in life how we start to think everything's up to us. And I was telling him how busy I was. And he just said, "Hey, Allen, listen, hurry is an attitude that comes from an agreement with a lie that God expects more of us than we can do each day."

Annie: When I tell you I underlined this. I'm about to turn. I have it tagged. Hurry is an attitude.

Allen: Yes.

Annie: Yes. Yes.

Allen: And that blew my mind. But when he said it, it was so disruptive. Because I was like, "No, no hurry is not an attitude. It's a reality. This is my life. And the more I sat with it, the more I realized, no, actually, he's right. And if it's an attitude, I can change my attitude. And if I'm making an agreement with a lie, that's not how I want to operate or live because the result of that is not going to be good fruit. So basically, Annie, when it comes to rest, we have to let go of this lie that God expects more of me than I can do each day, so the only way to do it is to multitask. Because, you know, we all think we can multitask better than we actually can. Like, we think we can do it seamlessly.

I'm at my desk many days and my wife will call and I'm talking to her, and she'll be like, "Are you doing an email while you're talking to me?" And as I'm typing, I'm like, "No. Well, maybe. I mean, what do you mean?" And she's like, "Allen, close the laptop. I want to talk to you." We don't multitask well because we're mostly absent from every... We're never anywhere when we're multitasking fully. We're like, partially everywhere.

So this agreement with the lie that it's all up to us and the only way to get through it all, is full blast, and then we ultimately crash and burn. And then we either get sick or we're just wiped out and we look for relief. And that relief never lasts. And it's the cycle, right? But the cycle works the other way too when we enter into Story 1, and we go actually, we were made for rest.

So it's okay to be off my laptop or screen or phone for days at a time sometimes to unplug from work, to do what you're doing with the podcast, to take a break and

know it's okay. The listeners will be okay and we'll be okay. And it's a time of just deep rest and we're going to come back refreshed. But that's a Story 1 mindset. Story 2, the fear would be, I can't do that. Because if we did that, what if we lose listeners? Or what if we miss an opportunity for something? Or what if... a million things right?

So yeah, Eden rest is this beautiful invitation into how do we breathe again. The purpose isn't to come back stronger only, although you will. But if it's just that, then it's just saying the only reason to rest is to get back to work and work better. Right?

Annie: Right.

Allen: But it's just-

Annie: The recharge your battery problem.

Allen: Right.

Annie: Right.

Allen: It's just for our soul care. And soul care doesn't happen in Story 2. There's really not any emphasis or work on heart care, soul care. You know, it's just getting by. Part of the beauty is choosing the Story 1 life is I get rest back, I get vision and voice and union with God back that was there and Eden.

C. S. Lewis has this great quote that says when the whole world is running towards the cliff, he who is running in the opposite direction appears to have lost his mind. That applies certainly to our world today, maybe more than when he said it back then. Because we're going to be living in a way that's countercultural when we're in Story 1.

A Story 2 world will never applaud you or me or anyone shifting out of the Story 2 into Story 1. So we have to go, Okay, this is not whether the world thinks is cool. It's not going to make an easier life necessarily. It may make it a little more challenging. But the real reason is because I want God at the epicenter of everything. That's my guarantee. And it's what I was created for. So whether it stays hard or it gets harder or gets easier, is somewhat not the point. The point is, am I in the story that God created me for? Because otherwise, I'm living in this virtual reality or unreality of Story 2. And I keep expecting that story to satisfy me and it never does, and I can't figure out why.

Annie: I can't figure out why. Right?

Allen: And then we blame ourselves.

Annie: Allen, I'm so glad everyone else is getting to listen to my counseling appointment here. So I just appreciate that everyone else is getting to partake of what I'm learning. In a world that tells us you can have everything you want if you work hard enough, it is hard not to translate that into our faith of you can have everything with God that you want if you work hard enough. And that is Story 2. That's not Story 1 living.

Allen: Right. And it's a Story 2 version of God even to think that God would create a world that ran that way. That's the enemy's version of the world. And that's the Ecclesiastes version. It's not the God of Story 1's version. The bottom line I tell people is listen, the book has a lot of ways that you're going to reclaim beautiful things in your life that you want that is what you were created for.

But the biggest reality of all is, as long as you're in the wrong story, the best that can happen there is never going to satisfy you, even if you're the CEO of your own company, even if you have the best marriage or everything with your kids all of a sudden is perfect or you find the perfect church, like, it's the perfect Story 2 church and the perfect Story 2 marriage and the perfect Story 2 version. And that will never satisfy.

So the number one goal is get back into what you were created for, Story 1, and then pursue those things with the right image of God, the right image of yourself, the right image of your heart. And that's where things change completely.

Annie: We don't often end the show like this. But it would mean a lot to me if we get in the show with you praying for our team as we go on this break. And will you just pray for our staff and for the listeners who are resting this summer, too? But selfishly, will you just pray for our staff and let our listeners join in as everybody gets a couple of weeks to rest from what we do here?

Allen: Absolutely. Yeah. God, we do, we come to you right now and we pray together for the team here, for the staff, for the sons and daughters that you have gathered with Annie on this mission. I pray for them to be able to fully release all the pressure of in the work of getting these podcasts done, and the writing and the content and the ministry. God, let them fully be able to just relax, to release, to breathe, and to have no expectation or burden on them other than your easy yoke. God help them live light and free with your presence, knowing that they don't have to do more during this time. That they actually can have time off the grid in Story 1 to have Eden rest.

Father, I pray that for every listener too, that if this conversation has stirred something in your heart, then go with that to God and say, God, I don't understand

fully what Story 1 is, or I don't even realize how embedded and entangled I am in Story 2. I didn't even realize there was a false narrative that I was born into but I want Story 1, I choose that, and God in that I want you at the epicenter of everything in my life. And I want to enter into it knowing you're a good father and you're a good creator and you'd have created a good story for me. So I enter back into what was lost all the way back in Eden. And God I claim that story, Story 1. Help me taste it, experience it, help me live it, and mostly help me do so together with you.

God, give us rest this summer. Give us exactly what we need. Not busyness, not some trip that's more stress than is good for our soul perhaps. But slow us down to your rhythm of rest and of joy and of peace. And let us get a taste of your Eden rest. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Annie: Amen. Thank you.

[01:08:39] <music>

Outro: Oh, you guys, isn't he great? Okay, make sure you grab a copy of *The Eden Option*. Tell Allen thank you so much for being on the show.

As a reminder, we won't have any shows airing next week as our teams will be taking some time off to rest. But we'll be back here on Monday, July 10 to kick off the TSF Hall of Fun with none other than pastor of the pod, Kevin Queen. Do you know why he's the pastor of the pod? Well, listen on July 10th and you will know.

And now you know what sounds fun to me—our summer Sabbath. I want to hear what sounds fun to one of our friends who's listening just like you.

All right, Carmen, because the show is called That Sounds Fun, tell me what sounds fun to you.

Carmen: Well, I'm Carmen from McPherson, Kansas. And what sounds fun to me, I have two things. I hope that's okay.

Annie: Of course it is.

Carmen: Number one is I love Kelle Hampton. She's a blogger.

Annie: I love her.

Carmen: She always puts out a summer bucket list, winter bucket lists. So I print those bucket lists like 16 by 20 and frame them and then my niece and nephew come over and we figure out what we're going to do.

Annie: I love it.

Carmen: So I can't wait for her new list to get released.

Annie: So for everybody who wants to follow Kelle, she is-

Carmen: So fun.

Annie: Is it ESTS?

Carmen: I think it's ESTS? Yes. I think that's right.

Annie: Perfect. Okay, so what is your second thing?

Carmen: Well, Annie, my friend Jill and I are coming up to Kansas City to see you and Carlos in just a few weeks.

Annie: Oh, I'm so glad.

Carmen: The last tour I got to meet you by happenstance because my flight... I flew out to Portland and my flight was delayed. So I got to the tour location when the confetti was coming down.

Annie: Oh my gosh, that's right.

Carmen: I know. Now I get to come and see the show. And my friend Jill gets to come so we can't wait.

Annie: I'm so excited. I cannot wait to see y'all.

Oh, I love it. All right, in the meantime, if you need anything else from me, you know I'm embarrassingly easy to find. Annie F. Downs on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook. But as of this afternoon, I am signing up for my summer Sabbath. So all will be quiet on the internet front around here. So I hope y'all have a great July. I hope you get lots of rest. I hope you get a lot of reading done and lots of joy in your life. I'm going for the same in mine.

I think that's it for me today, friends. Go out or stay home, do something that sounds fun to you. I will do the same. Y'all have a great weekend. We will see you

back here on Monday, July 10th as we kick off for the first time ever, The TSF Hall of Fun. See y'all then.